

2 Father

We reflect on the parenting of God
and our relationship as children of God

Keeping Stillness

As you come to the place of worship settle into a comfortable position and make your body still, relaxed but attentive. Breathe evenly. Just as our bodies provide breath for continuing life, without us often being aware of it, so God our Father gives and sustains our existence constantly; we are often simply too busy with other thoughts to notice . . . Notice now.

All All glory be to the Father
 and to the Son
 and to the Holy Spirit.
 As it was in the beginning,
 is . . . now . . .
 and shall be for ever.
 Amen.

Singing

Leader Hear the words of the prophet Hosea speaking out God's love for his people as a parent. Although they have ignored him and turned their backs on him, and although God is hurt by them, yet still he loves them and longs to welcome them home.

Reading Hosea 11:1-11

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Keeping Stillness

'Abba' is a close, affectionate term for your father, such as a young child would use. And Jesus said, 'Unless you become like little children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' Think of yourself now as God's toddler, either using a loving parent/child relationship you have experienced, or receiving in God the loving parenting you long for but never knew.

Leader Abba, Father, we thank you for your parenting:
A for the gift of life and our hidden growing in the womb;
B for our birth into this earthly home.

Leader Abba, Father, we thank you for your parenting:
A for the way you look after us and care for us;
B the way you guide our tentative steps of faith

and protect us from evil;
A for the way you teach us through our experiences,
B and listen attentively to every hesitant prayer;
A for the way you take us by the hand and lead us,
B and lift us high on your shoulders to carry us safely home.

Leader Abba, Father, we thank you for your parenting:
A for the loving and encouraging way you watch our spirits grow,
B and give us space to learn and space to choose;
A for the way you guide our friendships and warn us of danger;
B hold our anger and dry our tears.

Leader Abba, Father, we thank you for your parenting:
A for the way you are always there for us;
B closer than breathing and deeper than time;
A healing our memories,
B and calming our fears.
All Abba, Father, we thank you for your parenting.

Singing

Leader Hear this story which Jesus told to show us the high priority our Father gives to bringing us back into a full relationship with him.

Reading Luke 15:1-7

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Keeping Stillness

In the knowledge of God's trustworthy parenting, bring to God your loving Father all your brothers and sisters in Christ who are in any kind of pain or distress – mental, spiritual, emotional or physical. Imagine bringing each person for whom you pray into the healing, accepting presence of the God who already knows and loves them.

All Abba, our heavenly Father,
 your name is holy.
 Let your kingdom come on earth as in heaven.
 Let your will be done on earth as in heaven.
 Give us what we need each day.
 Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven others.
 Do not lead us into temptation
 But set us free from evil.
 For the kingdom is yours alone,
 power and glory are yours alone,
 for ever and for ever and for ever.

Amen.

Leader Abba, hear these prayers of your children gathered here.
We trust them with you,
knowing that you will answer
in full accordance with your loving and holy will.
As we go, may we hold on to the knowledge
that you are always our loving parent
and we your children.

All Bless us and keep us in your love for ever.
Amen.